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SUBJECT: H1N1 - MISSION GERMANY'S READINESS AND PLANNING

REF: Berlin 720 and previous

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Germany has had spike of H1N1 cases throughout the country, resulting in an average daily increase in new cases of over ten percent over the past two weeks. We review the country's outbreak status daily and are implementing measures consistent with Mission tripwire two. This cable summarizes the actions taken by Mission Management, Consular, and Health Unit sections. Mission Economic section reports and coordinates the work of post's Pandemic Influenza Working Group. END SUMMARY.

#### H1N1 Infection status

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12. (SBU) As of June 18, the National Reference Center for Influenza at the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) had confirmed 229 new cases of H1N1 in Germany. The majority of infections were originally assessed to derive from travelers to the US, but domestic transmission within Germany is now increasing. As is the case elsewhere, most of the new infections in Germany involve children and young adults. We have seen a spike of cases throughout the country, with a simple growth rate in new cases exceeding ten percent daily over the past two weeks. In the wake of the recent, heavily anticipated World Health Organization (WHO) increase in its pandemic flu alert level, German health authorities remain calm. "We have expected WHO to raise the alert level", German Health Minister Ulla Schmidt said. Germany's National Pandemic Plan guides federal and state coordination as the virus continues to spread. As preventive measures, health authorities have advised the public to consider hygiene measures such as washing hands several times a day and have disseminated information on national websites to inform the public.

#### Mission Tripwire level

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13. (SBU) Mission Germany's tripwires document describes Tripwire two as the following: "Clusters of infection, but

human-to-human spread still localized, suggesting the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully transmissible." Tripwire three is defined as, "Virus begins to show higher lethality rate or causes people to be very ill outside of source region, even, if it does not sweep across Europe. OR Flu in its current form (very few deaths outside source region, few patients gravely ill) sweeps across Europe, causing widespread illness and workplace absenteeism." Given the small number of cases and the low lethality of the current virus, the Mission Pandemic Influenza Working Group assesses that we remain at tripwire 2.

#### Mission Management actions

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¶3. (SBU) Management has broadcast Mission-wide staff announcements with recommendations on preparing for an influenza pandemic. These have included useful information and links to helpful websites as part of our effort to ensure readiness and staff safety. Management has also procured hand sanitizer for various sections. The Community Liaison Office (CLO) in Frankfurt is in direct contact with three schools that Consulate children attend and will be notified if students contract H1N1. CLO Berlin is also in close contact with all of the schools Embassy children attend in Berlin and Brandenburg and should be notified of any cases that may occur.

¶4. (SBU) The Regional Security Office (RSO) has procured an adequate supply of masks, rubber gloves and hand sanitizing gel for the local guard force at post throughout Mission Germany. These supplies have been placed at nearby locations

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for immediate deployment, should circumstances dictate. As a security precaution, local guards have been briefed on identifying and responding to persons with symptoms of H1N1. As appropriate, RSO will consult and coordinate with the U.S. military, officials from nearby international airports, and local government and public services to ensure a consistent and measured response with those around Mission Germany facilities.

#### Mission Consular actions

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¶5. (SBU) Mission Consular leaders have created a selection of permanent links to the Mission's American Citizens Services (ACS) webpage, providing the public with instant access to information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for up-to-date information on U.S. countermeasures and practical protective measures. It also links to the WHO for updates on worldwide developments. In coordination with RSO and the Health Unit, all Consular sections in Germany have deployed anti-septic hand sanitizers to staff members dealing with the public or handling mail and are implementing general guidance on frequent hand washing and covering up when sneezing or coughing. Further steps will include the procurement and deployment of hand-sanitizer stations for use by the public in consular waiting rooms (deployed by Consulate Munich; Frankfurt is in the process of procuring items). Consular staff members are instructed to stay home if they develop flu-like symptoms. We have not yet taken steps to limit public access to Consular sections, but we closely monitor the actions of other posts in the region and of German public health authorities. Consular leaders are making contingency plans in order to implement gradual restrictions on public access if future circumstances warrant.

#### Mission Health Unit actions

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¶6. (SBU) Mission Germany's Health Unit (HU) has inventoried and purchased additional supplies of personal protective

equipment (PPE), including gloves, masks, and antiviral medications. HU has confirmed stockpiles of Tamiflu and Relenza. HU and RSO have discussed modifying Consulate entry procedures, when necessary. HU is consulting with German health authorities to develop a mechanism for testing for H1N1 in country.

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